

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-14 ISO-00 SSC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 AID-20 DRC-01 /154 W

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R 281437Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9179

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 5923

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV ET

SUBJ: NEW CABINET APPOINTMENTS

REFS: (A) ADDIS 5153;

1. THREE NEW CABINET APPOINTMENTS ANNOUNCED MAY 28: DEF. ZEWDE GEBRE-SELASSIE FROM INTERIOR TO FOREIGN AFFAIRS (VICE MINASSIE HAILE); FIT. DEMISSIE TEFERRA FROM FORMER MINISTER OF STATE IN PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE TO ACTING MINISTER OF INTERIOR (VICE ZEWDE); AND TAKALIGN GEDAMU FROM PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT TO TELECOMMUNICATIONS (VICE GEN. ASSEFA AYENE).

2. COMMENT: APPOINTMENT OF ZEWDE AS FONMIN WAS WIDELY ANTICIPATED WITHIN IEG AND DIPLOMATIC CORPS. FROM NUMEROUS ACCOUNTS, HE HAD PROVEN TO BE RELATIVELY UNSUCCESSFUL "OPERATOR" AT INTERIOR AND GENERAL CONSENSUS WAS HIS CAREFUL, ANALYTICAL APPROACH
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MORE APPROPRIATE TO FOREIGN AFFIARS. AS FONMIN, HE SHOULD DO

MUCH TO REVITALIZE MOFA. ONE GOOD SOURCE BELIEVES ZEWDE'S APPOINTMENT LIKELY TO INCREASE CHANCES OF EMPEROR'S ATTENDANCE AT OAU SUMMIT NEXT MONTH. COULD BE, OF COURSE, THAT ZEWDE PREFERS LEAVE POLITICALLY EXPOSED DIFFICULT MININT POSITION IN FAVOR RELATIVELY MORE SHELTERED MOFA AT THIS JUNCTURE.

3. DEMISSIE WAS MINSTATE UNDER FORMER PM AKLILU AND HAS BEEN MORE OR LESS IN LIMBO SINCE AKLILU'S FALL. HE IS SPECIALIST IN SOMALI AFFAIRS, HAVING SPENT ALMOST ENTIRE CAREER IN HARRARGE PROVINCE. CONSIDERED "CONSERVATIVE", HAND-PICKED BY PRIMIN.

4. TEKALIGN RESIGNED FROM PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT SOME WEEKS AGO. WE DO NOT YET KNOW WHY HE ACCEPTED TELECOMMUNICATIONS.

5. TENTATIVE CONCLUSION WE DRAW FROM FOREGOING IS THAT PRIMIN CONTINUES MAINTAIN HIS POSITION AND MAY EVEN BE STRENGTHENING IT IN NEAR TERM. WYMAN

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